

October 22, 1999

**GENERAL PAY INCREASE AND SPECIAL SALARY RATES APPROVED
UNDER TITLE 38 UNITED STATES CODE (U.S.C.) 7455 (RCN 05-0827)**

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE: The purpose of this Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive is to authorize approval of a general pay increase equal to the amount of any General Schedule (GS) increase effective January 2, 2000, for employees being paid special rates authorized under Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 7455, when necessary to ensure adequate staffing or competitive pay rates.

2. POLICY: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy is to authorize a general pay increase equal to the amount of any GS increase for employees being paid special salary rates authorized under 38 U.S.C. 7455 if the facility Director determines that the increase is necessary to ensure adequate staffing or competitive pay and local funds are available to support the amount of the adjustment.

3. ACTION

a. Certification of Need and Availability of Funds

(1) Special rates may be increased by the amount of the GS increase only when the facility Director certifies that: "The increase is necessary to ensure adequate staffing and competitive pay." Such staffing and/or pay data considered to be sufficient significant documentation will be maintained at the facility and will be subject to review upon request by VHA Headquarters officials. Negative reports will be submitted if it is determined that existing rates are competitive and an adjustment is not necessary to maintain adequate recruitment and retention for the occupation. It is recommended that facility Directors allow pre-decisional involvement by local labor-management partnership councils before reaching a decision not to authorize an increase.

(2) To facilitate the annual review, each facility will be provided with a summary of the special rate authorizations covered by the annual review. The summary will be distributed to facilities through the Personnel Accounting Integrated Data (PAID) Control Points by October 8, 1999.

(3) Original, signed certifications formatted in the manner shown in Attachment A will be submitted no later than November 12, 1999, to the appropriate Network Director (10N_/051) for appropriate coordination and processing. Copies of signed certifications and reports should be faxed to the Customer Advisory and Consulting Group (051) at 202-273-7607.

b. Effective Date of Adjustments

(1) Pay adjustments for employees authorized special rates under Section D of MP-5, Part II, Chapter 3, for which the required certification has been submitted, will be effective January 2,

THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES JANUARY 13, 2001

VHA DIRECTIVE 99-047

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2000. This Directive constitutes approval by the Under Secretary for Health of such increases for nurse anesthetists (only those covered by special rates approved after April 7, 1991), physician assistants, licensed physical therapists, registered respiratory therapists, certified respiratory therapy technicians, licensed practical and vocational nurses, pharmacists, and occupational therapists.

(2) Pay adjustments for employees authorized special rates under Section C of MP-5, Part II, Chapter 3, for which the required certification has been submitted, will be effective at the beginning of the first pay period following concurrence by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), but no sooner than January 2, 2000. VA will submit a blanket certification of the need for an increase equal to and simultaneous with the GS increase to OPM and must also submit a list showing the current number of authorized positions by grade level for each authorization. **NOTE:** *This includes police officers and GS health care occupations, e.g., diagnostic radiologic technologists and medical technologists.*

c. Advisory assistance on the provisions of this Directive may be obtained by contacting the Customer Advisory and Consulting Group representative handling special salary rates for your facility.

4. REFERENCES

- a. Title 38 U.S.C. 7455.
- b. VA Manual MP-5, Part II, Chapter 3, Sections C and D.

5. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Human Resource Management Customer Advisory and Consulting Group (051) is responsible for the contents of this Directive.

6. EXPIRATION DATE: This VHA Directive expires January 13, 2001.

S/ M. L. Murphy for
Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Acting Under Secretary for Health

Attachment

Distribution: CO: E-mailed 10/26/99
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ATTACHMENT A

SAMPLE

The amount of the General Schedule increase for the special rate authorization(s) listed is necessary to ensure adequate staffing and competitive pay. This determination is supported by sufficient significant documentation. Funds are available to pay the increased salaries and benefits associated with this adjustment.

CURRENT SPECIAL RATE AUTHORIZATIONS

1. Pharmacist, GS-660
2. Medical Technologist, GS-644
3. Police Officer, GS-083

9/30/99 STAFFING DATA

<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>#POSITIONS FILLED</u>	<u>#POSITIONS VACANT</u>
Pharmacist	GS-9	5	0
	GS-11	25	3
	GS-12	3	1
Police Officer	GS-4	3	2
	GS-5	2	1
	GS-6	1	0

No certification is being submitted for the following special rate authorization(s):

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Medical Technologist, GS-644	Current rates are competitive with non-Federal health-care facilities. No adjustment is necessary.

Signature of Certifying Official: _____
(Medical Center Director)

Facility: ____ (Enter facility name and station number) ____

Date: _____